Depot Town Rag

Volume 16, Number 1 *"All the news in one block in one month."*

100% FREE
Rag Content
January 1993

- *Streamlined times*
- **Old Town to reopen**
- Window Awards
- Tasteless tales
- **Market events**

and other strictly local stuff. . . .

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

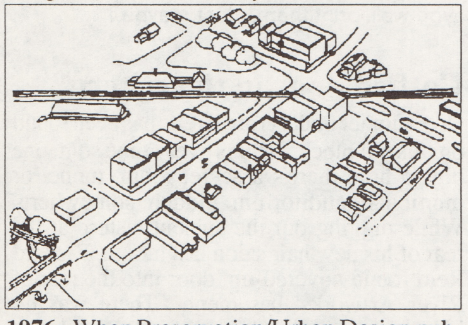
Watching our progress from high above the ground:

Somebody up there likes us, or so say at least eight generations of folks who've grown up in or around Depot Town. It seems there's almost always somebody coming into the district with a new view of how things look down here.

1855: One of the first was an itinerant artist who stayed in town for a week or so in 1855 walking all the streets and sketching the layout of buildings with the aid of a city plat. Although he never signed his name to the work, he chose an imaginary view above what is now Beyer Memorial Hospital and crammed most of the town into his northwest view of Ypsilanti. Frog Island still has the sluice for Norris's lumber mill cutting across the center and wood frame buildings stood where City Body is today. An eight-car steam train moves west along the tracks near the Cemetery Street (now Prospect) crossing.

1890: Thirty-five years later another artist sold his views of the town from a vantage point somewhere above today's Ainsworth Circle indicating 'progress' in a northeast view with smokestacks creating pollution over Our Town. City Body's present buildings were in place near the crux of three black-plumed steam trains: one eastbound near Superior, another westbound at Park Street and a third northbound along the Lincoln Street siding from what later become the Ford plant.

Both the above views will be on display at the Freighthouse on Saturdays this month.



1976: When Preservation/Urban Design published its study (above) for the planned rebirth of Ypsilanti's depot district they, too, chose to use an imaginary birdseye view, showing the railroad track as the 'level line' and the gridded streets moving off at diagonals.

All these early views took advantage of the prevalent angle of the sun, avoiding shadows on the façades of south side buildings. Awnings proliferated on the north side shops.

Birdseye views measure district's continuity since earliest days

Mark Yearby's photo from last August shows frenetic Festival activity on the block

New technology fascinates today's Depot Towners

Anyone who thought the blimp had gone the way of the Hindenberg just hasn't been keeping up with modern times. Last August saw Mark Yearby undocking his helium-filled blimp from a huge trailer in the parking lot at Old Town Hall. Yearby attaches his camera to the blimp, sends it to a tethered height of 250 feet and monitors his pictures from a chest-mounted video screen on the ground. When the wind is right - and the view is right - he snaps the shot.

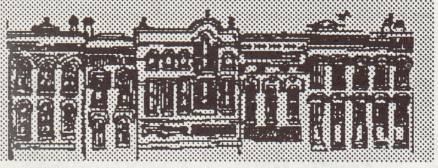
Calling his unique view of the world BIRDSEYE PRODUCTIONS, Mark sells his products to resorts, golf courses, and other promoters of tourism. His several shots of the 1992 Ypsilanti Heritage Festival will be on view and for sale at the Saturday Farmers' Markets this month. After all, say local promoters, just about everybody in town is in the pictures -- and they'd probably like to have a copy. Another decidedly local shot was made from above Frog Island with the crux of River/Cross and the railroad at the center. It shows the south side building façades most distinctly - along with the caboose, jazz tent and Antique Engine Club display.

Just as in the imaginary drawings of the nineteenth century, today's photos give us a new view of our world. "I can see the Willow Run Airport!" squealed one youngster, as if that attraction was a far-away wonder of the world. Perhaps it's the long view that fascinates us so. Others liked to imagine the photo, above, as if it showed the 'west coast,' with civilization only growing eastward from the shoreline. Even in a photograph, we tend to see what we want to see.

Yearby began his blimp-photo-venture just this past year and has floated his remarkable photographic tools high above some of the loviest locales in Michigan. As this issue went to press, he was photographing ski resorts as a promotion for a northern Michigan group.

Photographer Yearby specializes in high quality, low level aerial photography from his Ann Arbor office at 2803 S. State Street and can be reached at either 313/994-6500 or 800-968-8439. Easier yet, catch Mark at the Market on Saturdays this month and peruse his easel-mounted color enlargements of recent photos of our favorite commercial district.

Dateline: Depot Town:



Hair Station partner brings her own clients

They followed her here from Ann Arbor, indicates Lynn Harden, at Richard Reid's Hair Station at 50 East Cross. Lynn first started cutting hair twenty years ago in the Courtyard shopping center near UM's North Campus at Mr. Reid's, an earlier enterprise of one of Depot Town's newest businesspersons. In their new venture, Lynn and Richard are co-owners.

New awnings appear

Three new burnt orange awnings have appeared on Cross Street's north side gracing the facades of Standard Printing, Serenity House, and Cross Street Antiques. Serving as a most effective sign for each enterprise, they unify the building and declare - in traditional commercial fashion - the uniquenesses of the wonders found within. Serenity House's awning, which covers the front stairway to their second floor meeting rooms, is in a barrel-shape, giving balance and symmetry to the front of the trio of businesses in that building.

Architect restores and helps

Donald MacMullan, whose architectural studio is on North River Street, has restored his portion of the Millworks façade with wooden six-over-six windows, a transom light over his office's front door, and hopes to divide the interior for a possible second floor shop some day, eventually adding a stairway to the now-unused second floor.

"How can I help with the proposal for a new west enry to the Frieghthouse?" asked Donald last month. He and and Market Manager Gary Urick will get their heads together on that project.

It seems there's one of everything in Depot Town when some expertise is needed for a new project. Doctors, lawyers, candlestick makers; we've got 'em.

Ypsilanti lives - in the folklore of Ann Arbor's provincialism:

Somebody's saying bad things about your Mom

"Are you offended by the jokes Ann Arborites make about Ypsilanti?" asked a book store employee in the Athens of the Mid-West last month. He almost pronounced "Ypsilanti" correctly, and he dug through the glove compartment of his foreign car to find a much-Xeroxed copy of a list of provincial 'jokes' he was not able to commit to memory.

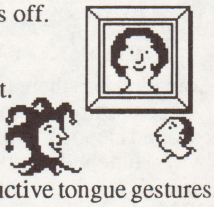
The respondent was a Depot Town merchant with a combined sense of humor and self-worth. "Heck no," said our neighbor, "and I know a local paper that can have some fun with your litigious litany, as well."

It's an age-ld tradition - for some - to boost their own self esteem by looking down on others. Their family crest probably shows them with their foot on somebody else's neck and the following are some of the one-liners that make them feel really good when considering A2 potholes and Art Fair parking in their front yards.

Here they are: a selection of Washtenaw-West misconceptions about Our Town probably shared by those whose response to the "Don't miss EMU football" yard signs is, "Either do I!"

[Note: Spelling, punctuation and typos have been corrected by an Ypsilanti proofreader." -ed]

You know you are a native of Ypsilanti if ...



- Your richest relative buys a home and you have to help take the wheels off.
- You think potted ham on a saltine is an hors d'oeuvre.
- There is a stuffed possum (sic) mounted anywhere in your house.
- You consider a six pack of beer and a bug zapper quality entertainment.
- Less than half of the cars you own, run.
- The primary color of your car is "Bond-o."
- Directions to your house include: "turn off the paved road."
- You honest-to-God think women are turned on by animal noises and seductive tongue gestures.
- Your family tree doesn't fork.
- Your wife's hairdo has ever been ruined by a ceiling fan.
- You've ever hollered "Rock the house, Bubba!" during your kid's piano recital.
- Your mother has ever been involved in a fist-fight at a high school sports event.
- You've ever barbecued Spam on the grill.
- Your neighbors started a petition over your Christmas lights.
- You regularly answer the question, "What have you been doing lately?" with, "Partying."
- Your brother-in-law is also your uncle.
- You have refused to watch the Academy Awards since "Smokie (sic) and the Bandit" was snubbed for best picture.
- The rear tires on the back of your car are twice as wide as the front tires.
- You prominently display a keepsake you bought at Graceland.
- You consider Outdoor Life serious reading.
- The diploma hanging in your T.V. room includes the words "Trucking Institute."
- Your grandmother keeps a "spit cup" on the ironing board.
- Your wife has ever worn a tube top to a wedding.
- You think beef jerky and moon pies are two major food groups.
- You think Campho-Phenique is a miracle drug.
- You have more than one brother named "Bubba" or "Junior."
- Your father encouraged you to quit school when he heardLarry had an opening at the lube rack.
- You think a styrofoam cooler is one of the greatest inventions of all time.
- Your fanciest outfit is a "sea foam" green colored polyester leisure suit.
- You've been too drunk to fish.
- You have a rag in place of your gas cap.
- You had a toothpick in your mouth when your wedding pictures were taken.
- Your lifetime goal is to own your own fireworks stand.

[Perhaps some of our Ypsilanti neighbors would like to put together a list of observations about our neighbors to the west? You write them and maybe we'll print them. Just maybe.]

Chamber realigns VCB as separate entity

[Ypsilanti Business Talk, December 1992] At their October 1992 meeting, the Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors voted in favor of realigning the Visitors and Convention Bureau as a separate entity, autonomous from the Chamber of Commerce. Organizational changes are targeted to take effect in June 1993.

"This is actually the continuation of an evolutionary change process begun almost three years ago to reorganize and refocus the Chamber to better serve its members," stated Tony Caprarese, Chamber president. Caprarese went on to say that, "most recently, during the accreditation process questions were raised concerning the interrelationship between the Chamber and VCB such as organizational structure, finances and accountability. Recent consideration of a county-wide VCB; and other views strongly expressed by area hoteliers also served as impetus to address these long debated issues."

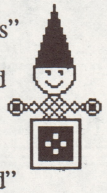
In July, the Chamber Board appointed two ad-hoc committees to study the impact of separation of the two entitles. The committees concentrated on the positive and negative effects separation would have on program focus, board composition and accountability, staffing and housing. In September the two committees reviewed their findings with the Chamber Board's Executive Committee, and in October a combined proposal and recommendation was made and approved by the Board of Directors . . . .

Catfish door in the cistern?

Yet another underground relic has been found on this old block. Seems every time someone digs a hole there's a secret room, tunnel or municipal auditorium hidden somewhere. While digging out the ancient cistern at the rear of his new hair salon last month, Richard Reid found covered-up door into the rear of River Artworks' basement. There was no indication on the interior that a door had ever been there, but it was obvious from the cistern. The discovery only served to revive the neighborhood folk lore of a giant blind catfish resided in that subterranean chamber for the last century. The fact that no fish was found did not lessen the impact of the story. It probably got out through the secret door!

Victorian Holiday awards to every lighted and decorated display on the night of 12/5/92

Aubree's Saloon -
"Best Blue Light Special and Tunnelvision Visions"



Cross Street Antiques -
"Genuine, Old Fashioned Christmas"

Crossing Guard Tower -
"A Christmas Tree for the Whole Neighbrohood"

Daily Grind -
"Best Christmas Spirit"

Depot Doo Hair Salon -
"Two Stories of Kids' Dreams"

Depot Exchange Antiques -
"Auto/Persuasive Didactic Encounter"

Esquire Draperies & Blinds -
"New England Christmas"

Hon's Flowers & Gifts -
"Most Angelic Glitz & Contented Pets"

Ike's Barbershop & Girl Scout Troop 565
"Best Homemade Ornaments"

J&R Trading Post -
the "All I Want for Christmas" award

James MacDonald's & Apple Annie's -
"Christmas Like It Used To Be"

Miller Motor Sales -
"Best Hudson Display"

Miller's Ice Cream Parlor & Emporium -
"Christmas Present"

Nickie Lawrence Knit Studio -
"Best Holiday Outfit"

Olde Towne Coin & Gold -
"Tiny Towne"

Potpourri Gardens -
"Rose Window"

Remington/Walker Design Studio -
"Superb Victorian Elegance"

Richard Reid's Hair Station -
"Holiday Teal & Trees"
w/ special recognition for the third floor facade

River Artworks -
"Artful Framing w/ Garlands & Lace"

Shear Genius -
"Most Artful Trim"

Sidetrack -
"Inside, Outside & Around the Corner Gorgeous!"

Standard Printing -
"Tradition"

Stitchin' Shop/Treasures -
"Handmade Elegance"

Teacher Shop -
"Happiest Snowman"

. . . and a special thank you to all who volunteered to help make the district's two-day holiday the great success that it was -- in the Freighthouse, in the Caboose, on the streets and in the shops' warm open houses.

And thanks to those who turned out to greet guests in Riverside Park on Christmas Eve.

Thanks, too, to all those who turned on their cornice lights to complement the Festival of Lights every night from Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve.

It was truly a "Victorian Holiday" down in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town in 1992!

Old Town Restaurant to reopen

After being closed for nearly two years, Ypsilanti's landmark restaurant will be open again with some startling differences — and much of the same old charm that made it such a popular eatery in its most recent incarnation. The rebirth of Depot Town's 'mall anchor' is being overseen by none other than Aubrey William French, the second generation owner of Aubree's Saloon and Sticks. "We really lost something down here," said Bill French, "when the Kornilakis family lost that business to the IRS. They had a great following of loyal clientele." The new plan should satisfy all the old regulars and excite much new traffic for the block, too.

French is the main force behind a creative arrangement of owner responsibilities who will direct the renovation and grand reopening of three restaurants in that location with a new partnership in this venture with Steve Beckett.

- **Breakfasts will once again be served** in the two dining rooms to the east, with that part of the business co-owned by Beckett. Steve's entry to the field follows his early experience in Aubree's own kitchen as well as at Bill Knapp's. The thirty-year-old cook and entrepreneur grew up in the business with experience through his high school and college years, then went into the baseball trading cards business, primarily dealing with the Meijer's chain. Steve and Bill are currently exploring the possibility of changing the entry/dining room/kitchen portion back to much of what it looked like about ten years ago.
- **The large main dining room to the west will be open evenings** for dinner specializing in broasted chicken and fish and with the same "casual atmosphere" that Depot Towners are accustomed to, says French. That portion of the business will be run by Bill and Sandee French, his wife and partner across the street at the saloon and Sticks. Plans to reactivate a liquor license are still in the works for that location.
- **A new connection will be made** in the farthest west portion of the property, which was never a part of the original restaurant, adding a fourth dining room and the third element of the new eatery. In all, the co-owners expect three separate entries to the restaurant, each depending on the special menu for that time of day. All will be served by the same kitchen.

But will it still be called the Old Town? Steve's wife, Jan, is still out on that decision. In a town where the RCTC is still called "Old Ypsi High," the OTR name will probably stick, whatever the new owners decide to call it. Meanwhile, a new roof has been installed and interior renovations continue. Watch the big windows on East Cross Street for the happy day the "Old Town" is once again open for breakfast.

Welcome the supporting advertiser/sponsors of the 1993 edition of *The DepotTown Rag*

As the district enters its sixteenth year of renaissance, probably less than half of today's building and business owners can remember the 'bad old days' which led up to 1975.

One of the first things the district's reorganizers agreed upon was the need for regular and dependable communication about their shared goals and promotional projects to put the old neighborhood back on the map.

Literally. That was the year the local Chamber of Commerce published a map of Ypsi and placed the 'legend' over the intersection of Cross and River Streets. They couldn't imagine anything in that old, run down district that would be worth featuring in their glitzy promotion of the area.

Depot Towners got the message and have been at the forefront of promotional activity ever since and the every-month publication of *The Rag* became a most important medium for telling their story to the rest of the world.

"It's the glue that holds the neighborhood together," said past DTA president, A. William French, as he anticipated managing the hopes and dreams of his neighbors through two years in that job.

Not a project by a local profit-making news company, *The Rag* continues to tell decidedly local stories about intensely local interests. In fact, the editor claims he gets next month's stories as he delivers this month's papers to the forty business on the block.

Local stuff for local folks. That's what Depot Town's been about for more than one hundred and sixty years now, and the tradition continues -- by plan, not by accident.

Readers are encouraged to pass on their appreciation to the pleasant people who announce their wares and services in these pages.

Any entrepreneurs who missed the first edition of 1993 can still get on board and save $$$ by paying for the next eleven months in advance - only $100 -- or at the regular $10 a month rate.

The underlying local motto: Support the businesses who support *The Rag*.

Yes: Include us in the 1993 issues of *The Rag*.

√ Owner/manager's name_____

√ Business name_____

√ Address Phone #_____

√ Other copy... Attached?

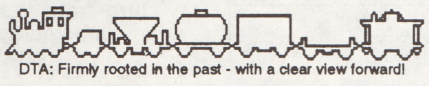
√ Camera-ready art enclosed? Yes No

√ See us as soon as possible!

Method of payment:
- $10 monthly
- $30 quarterly
- $100 in advance for 12 months

Make check payable to:
"Depot Town Association Inc."
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Depot Town Association, Inc., 17 December 1992


DTA: Firmly rooted in the past - with a clear view forward!

A warmer venue: Due to the heat not yet being turned up in the Caboose, the meeting was held next door around the tables of the J&R Trading Post. Thanks to Jerry Tillman for the comfort and coffee.

With the absence of the president and secretary, Vice president Judi Monaghan presided and editor Tom Dodd kept the minutes.

Minutes of November approved as published.

Treasury: $5500+ on hand. $2821.28 payment received for the Heritage Jazz Competition from the Heritage Festival Committee.

Kisosk update: Only Remington-Walker has responded to the call for new business information for the sidewalk directory. Former business names will be removed.

Victorian Holiday report: The December 5 & 6 event was a great success, reported co-chair Sandy Hoag. Posters, flyers, press releases, school bulletins, and neighborhood announcements brought hundreds to the district - which was covered by the dailies as front page news each day. City officials finally concluded that extra insurance was not needed, but it was too late to save the plans for the carriage rides. Special thanks to co-chairs Hoag, Tommy Steele, the Ypsilanti Players, story tellers Debbie and Paul Portera, Teddy Lidskow, Santa McKeever, and all the many helpers and donors who made this an occasion which overflowed the district's shops that day. Many reported their best business day, ever, and kicked off the holiday season in true traditional fashion. Recommendations for next year: More street decorations, plywood Victorian characters, brochure.

DDA: Carolyn McKeever reported City Council's admission of five properties into the Depot Town Downtown Development Authority and that their 2% Ad Valorem tax will now be added to their neighbors' for the continued improvement of the district. Council has also held its first reading for a Depot Town Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA) to keep assessment rises within the district. Passage is expected in early January.

Brochure: Merchants sited the need for a new district directory/brochure.

Chamber changes imminent: Carolyn McKeever also reported recent changes made by the policy makers within the Ypsilanti Vistor & Convention Bureau which will split from the Chamber of Commerce into office and management spaces of their own. Questions regarding DTA's Chamber membership must still be answered, but individual business memberships are encouraged.

Michigan Tourism magazine is now in the works to include Depot Town and its individual business attractions. Cost will be $40-$45 per business inclusion and information will be on the street this month.

A music production proposal for a March "Mardi Gras" in Saline was made to solicit DTA's liquor license capabilities but, lacking in specific details, was tabled/turned down at this reading.

Rag Report: Last year's sponsors supported all but $660 of the cost of publication of the district's monthly newsletter. Nine sponsors are in place to begin the sixteenth year of publication. DDA will underwrite the first three months of 1993.

Antique & Toy Show succeeded: Jerry Tillman reported great enthusiasm and success for the recent Freighthouse exposition which enjoyed over 300 paid attendees at the door. Exhibitors and dealers were so enthusiastic that another is planned for January 24.

Freighthouse Advisory Committee will meet at 7 pm Monday, January 15 in the Freighthouse Coffeeshop.

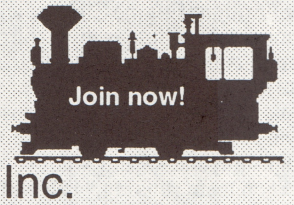
Next DTA meeting is 7:30 pm, Thursday January 21 at J&R Trading Post. All interested parties are invited to attend.

Start the year off right in Depot Town -

by supporting the organization that supports you year 'round:

Guarantee

Your support makes a difference!



Please include me among the members of

The Depot Town Association, Inc.

Name _____

Street _____

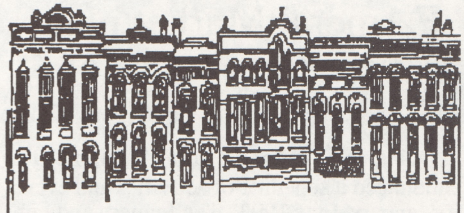
City_____State_____ZIP _____

I'm available to help with Association projects. Call me at _____

Annual dues:

- ❑ $25 Regular Member (Property or business owner)
- ❑ $10 Associate Member (Interested in and supportive)
- ❑ $100 Life Member (A great deal if you had joined in 1976!)
- ❑ Please place my name on the monthly mailing list of *The Depot Town Rag*
- ❑ Don't mail *The Rag*. I'll pick it up in the neighborhood.

✂ Clip and send check to "Depot Town Association"
c/o The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198



Strictly local stuff:

January 1993

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

Depot Town Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 21st
J&R Trading Post

Depot Town Downtown Development Authority
8 am Wednesdays
at the Daily Grind

Freighthosue Advisory Committee
7pm, Monday, 24th
Freighthouse Coffeeshop

Antique & Toy Show
Sunday, 24
at the Freighthouse

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

The Depot Town Association, Inc.
David Blackmer, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

You can rent
The Old Caboose

($25 + deposit) Call 483-4256.

Hey, kids:

Last month there were nine reindeer hiding in *The Rag*. How many cabooses can you find in January - counting the tiny one in the aerial photograph on page one?

Farmers' Market plans year-long series of special events

Our local Ypsilanti Farmer's Market has announced it schedule of activities and events for January-June 1993. The January and February events are elsewhere in The Rag, and copies of the full calendar with be circulating at the market and Depot Town for participants and shoppers, young and old.

New for '93 are an International Crafts Day on 3/6, an appearance by youth musiacians on 3/20, a "benefit" flea market for S.O.S. Crisis Center on 3/27, and a Humane Society Day on 4/17.

On January 16, former district used book purveyor, "Crazy Barb," returns for a one-day-stand used book sale, with paperbacks selling for 2 for $1 and hardcovers at $1 each. Welcome back, Crazy Barb, and come again! Also:

Meeting Notice: Freighthouse Events and Market Advisory Committee, Monday, evening, January 25, 7pm, at the market coffee shop. The public is welcome.

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market

January

1/2 Market closed today
1/16 Crazy Barb returns!
Used book sales 7am-3pm
1/23 Youth sales day!
Free stalls - Call for info.
1/30 Railroad Days '93
Safety, history, photos & train songs in the Coffeeshop

February

2/6 Workshop
Dried Plants & Flowers Crafts (482-4186)
2/13 Valentines Craft Show!
2/20 Youth Sales Day!
Sports Card "Trading Zone"
2/27 Community Health & Safety Day!
Watch for flyer and event information

Market Hours:
Wednesday and Saturday 7am - 3pm
Open year 'round
in the railroad freighthouse
Ample Free Parking
Live music every Saturday am
For information: 483-1480

DEPOT TOWN
UP YOUR YPSI

The Modern Age streamlines into Ypsi

The Mercury, a streamlined steam engine, at the East Forest Street bridge in 1940

[Picture from the collection of Virginia T. Adamic, photographed by her husband, John.]

Nobody liked those old trains, anyway, suggest some of our neighbors

Nostalgic as some of us down in the depot district like to get about the "good old days," at least a few of our neighbors indicate the old trains were nothing more than a nuisance.

"We never really paid any attention to them," said one frequent contributor to local memories last month. "We just didn't notice the trains much. There seemed to always be one stopped at the depot, but we didn't pay too much attention unless it was one of the rare times when we were getting on board, ourselves."

"The only time we noticed the steam engines was when they delayed our bus on the way to school," confides one local man. "They were mostly in the way, we felt at the time."

"Girls didn't hang out at the depots much," said Sam Brecht in his recent presentation to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. "It was really a masculine place to be," and he further indicated that only a few of the boys hung out there -- but they were really hooked on trains.

They still are, if the crowds around the ancient machines of the exhibits of the Depot Town Antique Engine Club are any indication. Although the Club is two thirds male, the comments of observers at their shows come mostly from the men.

"We used to have one of those gas-driven Maytags in our farm's washouse, but we never thought anyone would want to collect them and keep them running," is a typical response of watchers at the Club's local expositions.

Seldom is a female member of the human race seen drooling over a model railroad layout, either. It seems that playing with trains, large or small, is mostly a boy thing.

As we anticipate still more changes in rail travel along this main line, female readers are encouraged to give the rest of the readership their thoughts and memories about the trains that stopped in Ypsilanti. Send your notes (and more excellent photos like Virginia's) to *The Rag* editor and we'll exercise a more feminine point of view in the old railroad district this year.

Deco trains roar into town

Just as Dr. Arwulf Arwulf always tells us on his WEMU jazz programs, "You've got to be modernistic!" . . . and even the steam railroad industry knew it had to look streamlined in order to keep up the progress of the machine age in America.

In the late 1930s and -40s nearly every inanimate object took on the speedy look of art deco and even a stationary toaster looked like it was capable of attaining a speed of at least 45 miles per hour. "Going like sixty!" was the highest compliment that could be paid to someone's top speed of the moment and even clunky steam engines succumbed to the trend.

Fast and powerful as they were, they still were fueled by coal, stopped to take on water and spewed black smoke above and behind them in their progress through town and countryside. Power, however, was worshiped, and the sleek sides and front end were sculpted to indicate they had been shaped by the wind.

Today's Greyhound buses carry only the dog logo from the period, their windswept body designs gone the way of the Chrysler Airflow Sedan. The canine species is still both fast and fast appearing -- but not the buses.

As the international auto industry reshapes its product, nearly every new car design is the product of a computer-designed model from a research foundation's wind tunnel. Curiously, they all seem to have been shaped by the same hurricane, leaving the cars' nameplates to differentiate their differentiating qualities.

Railroad engines, meanwhile, evolved into streamline diesels, then into giant boxes of power with only a slight forward slide into the mass of air holding it onto the tracks.

While some sporty autos include airfoils on their sterns to hold them down onto the roadway, even the proposed one hundred-mile-an-hour Bullet Train doesn't seem to need such air directional restraints. Opponents of the fast-track plan say "It'll never get off the ground, anyway," and suggest the only air pressure here is the "hot air" of politics.

That tradition never speeds through very fast; it seems to stay on the drawing boards of change as if it were a permanent exhibit.

Evindence of "Streamlined Progress" can still be found in the antique emporia of Depot Town's shopping district. Art Noveau, Art Deco and Art Moderne´ all attest to the fact that speed was desirable and if we were going to get modern, we had better get on the right and get going.

The "full speed ahead" theme seemed to lessen its momentum with the concern over the availability of fossil fuels and the popularity of privately owned automobiles. With the increase of traffic deaths, speed limits were lowered -- and people got out of their cars and walked around the old neighborhoods, remembering the good old days of fast cars, powerful trains and Gasoline Alley worship of anything fast.

Time-saving technologies gave us time to slow down and reflect on what we had done yesterday and what we plan to do about it tomorrow.

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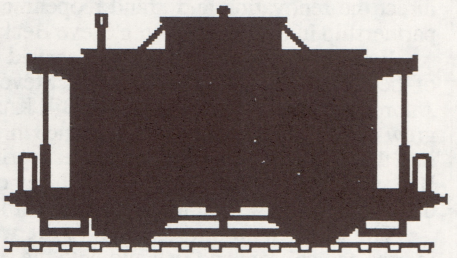

Caboose logo fits district's credo

"Firmly rooted in the past -- with a clear view forward" seems to be an apt theme for the first issue of the new year, as well as the theme for DepotTown's cooperative neighborhood spirit through its Assocation since 1976.

Back then DepotTowners seemed to think 'history' was somewhere in time before the temporary residency of the God's Children motorcycle gang but, today, 'history' often seems to start in 1976.

"I remember when the restaurant was called 'Turners'," state some of our newer old timers. Worse yet, too many people can remember the several grandiose plans for yet another restuaurant to be installed in the former depot.

No matter when they arrived in Depot Town, locals like to tell about how it used to be down here and some tell it from personal experience; others from reading about it or imagining it.

When the Association solicited financial support for the purchase and delivery of the hundred-year-old Grand Trunk Caboose several years ago, that ancient piece of rolling stock was seen as a most approriate case-in-point to highlight the active preservation of this old commercial district. Now, it looks like the buildings have passed the Caboose by and it's time to remodel the other way for a change. Bids for the continued restoration of the Caboose are still being solicited by DTA officials with a view toward its catching up with the efforst of the rest of the district.

Still, it was then-co-owner of the Follett House, Marybelle Suczek, who coined the snappy slogan to accompany the Caboose in its role as a symbol for the district. Depot Town still seems to fit that motto, stuck in the picturesque 19th Century architecturally, but looking ahead into the new year with as much vision and energy as seen in our recent history.

Many of the strip malls have come and gone; still others are slated for immediate obsolescence. The economy slugs along with the political winds and earth movers are parked in farmers' fields between Ypsilanti and Plymouth, poised to build some new history into our future.

Depot Town has seen it all - and will again - as we wish each other a Happy New Year!

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